

US FORCES INTERFET (USFI) Operation STABILISE East Timor

Executive Overview

1. INTRODUCTION

In September 1999, USCINCPAC deployed US forces to Australia and East Timor. The mission was to provide unique US capabilities support to an Australian-led peace enforcement operation authorized by UN Security Council Resolution 1264. The deployment was a Chapter 7 response to the eruption of violence by pro-integration militia forces in East Timor. Australian defense forces formed the headquarters and combat force nucleus of INTERNATIONAL FORCE, EAST TIMOR (INTERFET). Assigned the mission to restore peace and security, "Operation STABILISE" eventually grew to encompass troops, aircraft, ships, and other capabilities from 20 different nations including the United States. The US national contingent was designated US Forces INTERFET (or USFI) a "Joint Force" though not a "Joint Task Force" (JTF). USCINCPAC chartered USFI to provide the following US-unique capabilities to Operation STABILISE:

- Logistics (including C-130 aircraft, heavy lift helicopters);
- Intelligence (including Trojan Spirit II, electronic surveillance, counter-intelligence, and analytical personnel);
- Communication (including tactical satellite terminals, long haul satellite communications, data networks, and voice switching)
- Civil Affairs (Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC) training, support, and operations)

From September 1999 through February 2000 USFI proved itself capable of meeting the demands of its highly dynamic supporting role in assisting peace enforcement and subsequent humanitarian assistance operations under the auspices of INTERFET. In doing so, USFI did not conform to any standard organization. Rather USFI represents an experiment in limiting the role and size of US participation while continuing to demonstrate our commitments to allies and our support to the growing numbers of peace operations underway in the world.

This document is organized into two parts. The purpose of the first part is to attempt to summarize common threads and build context. It is from that context that the reader may be better able to identify issues germane to future military interventions where the US plays a supporting role. The second part contains specific lessons learned through the personal observations of US military personnel involved in this operation. By definition, those diverse views come from a variety of perspectives and will be incomplete and sometimes even confusing or contradictory.

2. SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS

In mid-1999, instability in East Timor generated calls for Indonesia to relinquish control of the former Portuguese colony. Ever since the Indonesian invasion of East Timor (EM) on 7 Dec 1975, the Timorese people have been engaged in a struggle for freedom from the Indonesian government (GOI). GOI has always viewed EM as “the pebble in our shoe” and only, on 27 Jan 1999, did then-President B.J. Habibie offer the Timorese people a referendum for independence. (Note: Figures throughout this section summarize key dates organized in the 5 formal operational phases as defined in Joint Publication 3-07.3 “Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Peace Operations.”)

With the Habibie announcement, the GOI and many local “businessmen” began to organize several small militia groups. Many militias had been in existence for years due to the Indonesian concept of civil security, but the militias formed in early 1999 were more radical in nature. Over the next several months, militia groups and elements of the Indonesia military (TNI) terrorized pro-independence supporters in an effort to force the East Timorese to vote to remain Indonesian sovereign territory. On 5 May 1999, the UN brokered talks between Indonesia and Portugal (prior to 1975, East Timor was a Portuguese colony). During those talks, GOI agreed to hold a referendum for East Timor autonomy in August 1999. As a result, United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) was created to oversee the voting and transition period, if necessary. The referendum date was set for 30 Aug 1999 and pre-balloting violence continued throughout the summer. This resulted in planning staffs across the Theater initiating the first phases of the planning cycle. The role of US forces and how they would be employed should the need arise remained unclear. Based upon anticipation that the East Timor referendum vote might become violent, speculative planning for a “situation in Timor” commenced during July 1999. This early effort served primarily as an intelligence, geographic, and estimate of supportability primer for several staff officers who would later occupy key billets within USFI.



Example of destruction that occurred throughout East Timor during September 1999.

The East Timorese people overwhelmingly voted against autonomy and in favor of independence; chaos sponsored by the pro-integrationist factions immediately erupted. Thousands of East Timorese were forced to flee and became refugees. The Indonesian military forces (TNI) did little to control the violence. In response to the threat to regional stability that the violence posed, the UN authorized a multi-national force, with the approval of Indonesia, to enter East Timor and restore peace and security. The United States, focused on peace operations from Haiti to the Balkans, welcomed the selection of another nation to assume the leading role for the multi-national force. Australia, with regional interests and with a professional military force capable of forming the core, stepped forward and offered its services. The United States, a staunch ally of Australia, assumed a supporting role and began preparing to provide unique capabilities, which, although not manpower intensive, would be “force multipliers”.

Key events prior to and during Preparation and Deployment	
27 Jan 99	Habibie offers Timorese referendum
5 May 99	Indonesia agrees to hold referendum in August
11 Jun 99	UN Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) is established
30 Aug 99	East Timorese reject autonomy via democratic election
31 Aug 99	Violence erupts for the next several days
31 Aug 99	USFI Liaison officers deploy to Brisbane
8 Sep 99	UNAMET evacuates Dili
10 Sep 99	CJTF TSO on station
13-22 Sep	USCP Exercise TEMPO BRAVE, Okinawa, Japan
11 Sep 99	Planners deploy to Brisbane
12 Sep 99	Indonesian President Habibie requests international peacekeepers
15 Sep 99	UN Security Council authorizes the mandate of INTERFET

Figure 2-1

Naval forces provided the capability to respond rapidly to the crisis. The USS MOBILE BAY and USNS KILAUEA were directed to the area and, on 10 Sep, USCINCPAC designated these vessels Joint Task Force, Timor Sea Operations (JTF TSO). JTF TSO was assigned the missions to escort commercial and military transports in the vicinity of East Timor and to be prepared to serve as “lily pads” for helicopters transiting between Australia and East Timor. On 12 Sep, Indonesian President B. J. Habibie announced Indonesia would allow a UN authorized multi-national force into East Timor. This statement was the final critical step for launching international ground-based efforts to restore order to that troubled land. On 10 Sep, in response to East Timor crisis, CINCPAC dispatched the Deployable Joint Task Force Augmentation Cell (DJTFAC) to assist the Australian planning effort. The strategy developed during this planning process was labeled the “oil spot” because forces would secure Dili first then spread to other

strategic locations as forces flowed into the country. From these individual “oil spots” ever-larger areas would come under INTERFET control. During this same time period, US President Clinton stated at the New Zealand economic summit that the US would support any UN sanctioned mission in East Timor with logistical and other support assets.

Key events during Establishment of the Lodgment	
15 Sep 99	Establishment of US Forces INTERFET authorized
17 Sep 99	BGen Castellaw arrives in Sydney; Sydney HQ Established following day
18 Sep 99	US Forces Darwin HQ Established
19 Sep 99	MSQ 126 arrives in Theater
19 Sep 99	EP-3 arrives in Theater
19 Sep 99	C-130 detachment arrives in Theater
20 Sep 99	US Forces INTERFET staff arrives in Darwin, Australia
20 Sep 99	Elements of USFI land in Dili with deploying forces on D-Day
27 Sep 99	COMUSF INTERFET Dili HQ Established

Figure 2-2

The best-prepared Australian headquarters to lead this effort was concurrently engaged in preparations for a US bilateral training exercise in Queensland, Australia. On 19 Sep 99, Major General Peter Cosgrove, Commander 1st Division and Deployable Joint Force Headquarters, was appointed Commander of INTERFET. In short order, CROCODILE '99, a combined US-Australian exercise, was restructured. Simultaneously, CINCPAC activated United States Forces International Force East Timor (USFI). Brigadier General John G. Castellaw was appointed Commander United States Forces International Force East Timor (COMUSF INTERFET). USFI lead elements immediately began to deploy to Sydney and Darwin, Australia. All US assets and personnel deployed in Australia were OPCON to COMUSF INTERFET. Troops, materiel and supplies from various nations were quickly staged at northern Australian military bases in preparation for movement into East Timor.

On 19 September, MG Cosgrove traveled to Dili to meet with his Indonesian counterpart an old acquaintance, TNI MG Synakri, to coordinate the arrival of INTERFET forces. The meeting was cordial and presaged an unopposed landing by the 3d Brigade, Australian Army and attached British and New Zealand forces on 20 Sep 99. Later in the day, MG Cosgrove, accompanied by national commanders including BGen Castellaw, arrived in Dili to take command and establish INTERFET headquarters. US personnel serving as exchange officers with Australian units, USFI LNOs assigned to INTERFET Headquarters and a Marine KC-130 carrying Australian infantry constituted US participation on D-Day. INTERFET forces immediately commenced securing positions

within the smoky haze that covered the city. INTERFET's initial presence demonstrated the international community's resolve to put an end to the violence in the fledgling nation. Significant numbers of TNI remained. Under the agreement that MG Cosgrove had brokered, INTERFET shared with the TNI the responsibility for protection of the key pieces of infrastructure that remained.

On 21 Sep 99, USAF C-130 aircraft -- diverted from New Zealand where they had been supporting the visit of President Clinton -- began flying missions in support of the air bridge that would continue uninterrupted until 17 Nov 99. An EP-3 deployed from Misawa and began operations from Tyndal RAAF Base south of Darwin shortly thereafter. On 25 Sep 99, the TNI began a deliberate pullout from East Timor. On the same day the TNI began their gradual withdrawal, BGen Castellaw selected the site for the U.S. compound. This compound would become his Dili (FWD) headquarters and eventually the permanent location for a subordinate headquarters, US FORCES East Timor, commanded by Colonel R. Strong.

Three days later, there were an estimated 1,200 TNI troops remaining in East Timor. Despite INTERFET rapidly occupying recently vacated public buildings, looting and additional destruction continued throughout Dili. The USFI LNO, in conjunction with INTERFET HQ, implemented port and airfield surveys at Dili and Baucau. The surveys were conducted by US personnel from the Air Force, Navy and Army and significantly contributed to the INTERFET force flow by certifying major APODs/SPODs for the introduction of forces or supplies. Throughout the remainder of Sep 99, additional personnel and materiel flowed into Dili from several participating nations. The Dili headquarters was the focal point for introducing US support capabilities into East Timor.



US Force protection measures included concertina wire, perimeter lighting and guard posts such as this one under construction at the Dili University communications compound.

On 3 Oct, INTERFET, after establishing itself in Dili, began expanding its presence in specific locations throughout the country pursuing the methodical “oil spot” strategy. This effort began with the Baucau airfield and continued in the east with Los Palos. MG Cosgrove recognized the militias’ center of gravity as the Inter-Timor Border (ITB) over which they received sustainment and across which West Timor provided a sanctuary. He then made *the defining operational decision* of the entire East Timor campaign. On 10 Oct 99, INTERFET moved west to the ITB with seven Blackhawk helicopters and approximately one Australian infantry battalion. INTERFET deployed troops along the ITB at Batugade to exploit the power vacuum created by the TNI withdrawal from that part of the country. This decision was fraught with risk because there were still substantial TNI forces in the Dili area and it meant this Australian infantry battalion was no longer present in Dili to provide security. With approximately one-third of his meager forces, COMINTERFET occupied positions along the border two weeks earlier than planned forcing militia units across the border into West Timor and cutting the supply lines. Thus, the will and cohesiveness of the militia were broken before they could mature. MG Cosgrove's bold and audacious decision to expand INTERFET's sphere of influence despite limited manpower and mobility assets enabled INTERFET to grasp control of the militias’ center of gravity and to accelerate the establishment of peace and security with minimal violence and casualties.

Key events during Expansion of the Lodgment	
3 Oct 99	Expansion outside Dili begins
5 Oct 99	USS BELLEAU WOOD/31st MEU Arrive
8 Oct 99	TROJAN SPIRIT Arrives in Theater
8 Oct 99	CMOC Arrives in Dili, East Timor
10 Oct 99	INTERFET moves to Inter-Timor Border (ITB)
19 Oct 99	GOI recognizes East Timor's independence
20 Oct 99	Indonesian Presidential and Vice Presidential elections held
20 Oct 99	Indonesia's National Assembly revokes 1978 decree incorporating East Timor into Indonesia
20 Oct 99	Lead element of Task Force Thunderbird arrives in East Timor
21 Oct 99	COMUSF East Timor Established
21 Oct 99	Xanana Gusmao returns to EM
22 Oct 99	INTERFET forces deploy to Oecussi Enclave
25 Oct 99	UNAMET mission ends

Figure 2-3

The expansion focused on establishing order in the major villages of each province using a significant amount of heliborne and fixed-wing mobility. The timely arrival of the USS BELLEAU WOOD, a large deck amphibious ship complete with a contingent of

Marines from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (31st MEU), provided both a visible presence and the means to rapidly establish US command and control. The USS BELLEAU WOOD also provided MG Cosgrove with a much-needed visual show of force at a time when he was moving up his timetable for establishing INTERFET's presence on the ITB. He used the US naval presence skillfully via the media to add depth to INTERFET and underwrite his thinly stretched forces. On 8 Oct, the US-supported Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC) was ready to commence operations and began the complicated process of coordinating relief efforts with the numerous civilian agencies. The following day, the JTF Enabler from the 31st MEU went ashore. This historic first deployment for 31st MEU provided the necessary critical communication links (SIPR/NIPR/STUIII) to develop a permanent US command post. Meanwhile, the rapid expansion and assumption of control of East Timor by other INTERFET forces forced the remaining militia elements across the border into West Timor. Additionally, TROJAN SPIRIT, an intelligence communications package, arrived in Darwin on 8 Oct and deployed to East Timor shortly thereafter in support of USFI.

Simultaneously, the political process progressed sufficiently for the Indonesian military to peacefully withdraw from East Timor after the GOI recognized East Timor's independence on 19 Oct 99. "Task Force Thunderbird", an Army signal unit from 11th Signal Brigade, forward deployed into Baucau and Dili on 20 Oct 99. This unit represented the principal communications support promised by the US to the Australians. The relief of the 31st MEU's JTF Enabler by Task Force Thunderbird on 23 Oct 99 also symbolized the shift to the more deliberate consolidation of capabilities that characterized the enforcement phase of the INTERFET mandate.

The improved political situation and rapidity with which INTERFET forces secured the border crossings enabled the last major operational thrust of this campaign. Recognizing the need for an INTERFET presence in the Oecussi Enclave, MajGen Cosgrove deployed forces into area and secured the remaining East Timorese territory on 22 Oct 99. Throughout this operation, the tempo, discipline and firepower of INTERFET forces proved overwhelmingly superior to the disenfranchised militia. Incredibly, only two Australian servicemen were wounded in a series of firefights and ambushes that left eight militia members confirmed killed and several more wounded.

As the measures of effectiveness were met for INTERFET's mission accomplishment, planning accelerated for the transition and handoff to the United Nations Transition Authority for East Timor (UNTAET). UNTAET was established to administer the territory and exercise legislative and executive authority during the transition period from INTERFET to UNTAET control and eventual withdrawal of the UN presence. UNTAET's mandate consists of the following elements:

- To provide security and maintain law and order throughout the territory of East Timor;
- To establish an effective administration;
- To assist in the development of civil and social services;

- To ensure the coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development assistance;
- To support capacity-building for self-government;
- To assist in the establishment of conditions for sustainable development.

By the end of October, nearly 40 UN agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were operating within East Timor and setting the stage for the next phase of operations. On 26 Oct, a second major amphibious ship, the USS PELILEU arrived to relieve the USS BELLEAU WOOD. By the end of October, INTERFET's presence was felt throughout East Timor. The pace of US operations reached its highest level. In addition to fast tempo tactical operations, there was a noted increase in emphasis on humanitarian assistance efforts to get food, shelter, and medicine to remote areas within East Timor ahead of the coming monsoon season.



The CH-53E heavy lift helicopters from the 11th MEU were in continuous demand and the ship was constantly on the move to best position the ship to launch the aircraft for their next mission. Additionally, LCUs and LCACs from the USS PELILEU moved several hundred tons worth of supplies and equipment.

By mid-October Dili roadside market stands began reopening as peace and security returned to the streets.

The bulk supplies moved by MEU and ship assets were important both to INTERFET forces and humanitarian assistance for the East Timorese. These assets were especially crucial in the positioning of INTERFET forces in the Oecussi Enclave and Manatuto areas. On 29 Oct 99, BGen Castellaw announced to his staff that mission objectives were accomplished, that INTERFET had “won” and peace and security had been reestablished in East Timor.

Key events during Enforcement of Mandate

25 Oct 99	UNTAET mission commences
26 Oct 99	USS PELILEU/11 th MEU Arrive in Theater
31 Oct 99	Indonesian military withdraw from East Timor
2 Nov 99	US Ambassador to ID visits East Timor
16 Nov 99	Sergio de Mello arrives in Dili, East Timor
22 Nov 99	US Ambassador to the UN, COMINTERFET, SRSG De Mello and staff meet with senior ID representatives and sign 'Memorandum of Technical Understanding' at Motaain on control of the Inter-Timor Border
1 Dec 99	General Shelton Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff visits Darwin and East Timor
7 Dec 99	COMINTERFET, COMWESTFOR, Chief UNMO and Mr. Gusmao meet with West Timor officials at Batugade to discuss border issues

Figure 2-4

During November, over 4,470 metric tons of humanitarian supplies were transported and distributed throughout East Timor. Between the arrival of INTERFET in September and



the end of November, almost 100,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) had returned to Timor. The transition to civilian administration accelerated with the installation of Special Representative to Secretary General (SRSG) Sergio De Mello on 16 Nov 99 but military to military talks remained stalled.

INTERFET forces including this Helicopter Support Team in Oecussi were routinely greeted by jubilant East Timorese children.

Finally, a visit by US Ambassador to the UN Richard Holbrooke “jump started” the moribund discussions between INTERFET and the TNI. Mr. Holbrooke brokered a meeting between COMINTERFET, TNI military leaders and Taur Matan Ruak (Commander of the FALINTEL) at the border town of Motaain, West Timor. Each party agreed to respect the current East-West Timorese boundary and to discourage retaliatory militia violence. Mr. Holbrooke was transported via the 11th MEU (SOC) helicopters to various sites in East Timor.

USFI hosted U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Dr. John Hamre and his wife for Thanksgiving in Dili. Dr. Hamre visited several distinguished East Timorese including Nobel Laureate Bishop Belo and Sister Marlene, an American Nun, who runs the local orphanage and school. Dr. Hamre and Mrs. Hamre served USFI personnel a traditional Thanksgiving Day meal in the USFI compound. The 11th MEU (SOC) provided security personnel along with helicopter support during Dr. Hamre's visit.

November was punctuated with a myriad of operations by USFI units. The ARG/MEU spearheaded many operations in support of INTERFET including: Operation Rice Bowl I&II, hundreds of tons of rice flown to Maliana using CH-53s; Operation Law and Order, the deployment of the Gurka Rifle Company to Atauro Island using LCUs and LCACs. The USAF C-130 component flew numerous missions transporting cargo and IDPs into Dili and Baucau before redeploying to home station between 17-20 November. After supporting Dr. Hamre's visit the ARG/11TH MEU (SOC) left the AOR headed home to California via Hawaii on 27 Nov 99.

Key events during Transition and Redeployment	
13 Oct 99	EP-3 departs RAAF Tyndal
20 Oct 99	Final USFI unit (TF Thunderbird) deploys to East Timor; staff commences development of retrograde plan
26 Oct 99	USS BELLEAU WOOD/31 st MEU Depart
22 Nov 99	Air Component and USAF C-130s retrograde to home stations
26 Nov 99	USS PELILEU departs
28 Nov 99	US Contracted helicopters arrive and begin executing missions in Dili
7 Dec 99	Intelligence Augmentation Team leaves Dili
15 Dec 99	CMOC and TF Thunderbird depart from Dili
17 Dec 99	Disestablishment of US Compound in Dili, East Timor
18 Dec 99	USFI staff of 52 remain behind in Darwin/Dili
1 Jan 00	Communications commercialization complete
26 Jan 00	Transition of USFI to USGET begins
26-31 Jan 00	USS JUNEAU supports operations off Oecussi enclave
1 Feb 00	USFI Disestablishes

Figure 2-5

In December, the accelerating transition to UN humanitarian operations resulted in the downsizing of the CMOC and the commercializing of many functions formerly performed by INTERFET military forces. The most significant piece of the commercialization effort was the US contract for four heavy/super heavy lift helicopters and the Australian procurement of a commercial communications infrastructure. In addition, a long series of distinguished visitors passed through Darwin, Dili and other parts of East Timor during the month. These visitors included: CJCS General Henry

Shelton; CINCPAC, Admiral Dennis Blair; Senator Jack Reed from Rhode Island and a Congressional delegation led by the Speaker of the House of Representatives the Honorable Mr. Dennis Hastert.

By mid-month, the conditions were set to withdraw US assets from East Timor and, on 17 Dec -- a ceremony marked the disestablishment of US Headquarters, Dili. The majority of US forces in Darwin retrograded to home station leaving a minimal combat service support detachment and a core staff in anticipation of a planned mid-January USFI disestablishment. However, the U.S. decided to resize its support following INTERFET. Thus, the remaining US Forces INTERFET staff in Darwin provided a planning nucleus for the newly arriving US Group East Timor (USGET) contingent, which will continue to orchestrate US Support in the East Timor area. C-130 and C-12 aircraft returned to Darwin to support COMUSF INTERFET operations and facilitate the retrograde of INTERFET. The USS JUNEAU and a Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF) deployed to East Timor 26-31 January to provide US presence and assist in HA operations off the Oecussi enclave. USGET will provide command, control and liaison functions similar to US Forces INTERFET for any US forces that may be ordered into theater in support of UNTAET.

In its five months of existence, INTERFET demonstrated its ability to rapidly mobilize. According to the US Ambassador to Australia, Hon. Genta Hawkins Holmes, INTERFET had succeeded in accomplishing the following:

- Established peace and security through a credible deterrent security presence in all parts of the territory
- Prevented armed violence by any group in East Timor
- Developed, in cooperation with Indonesia, agreed procedures for border management
- Created conditions and provided escort support for large numbers of displaced persons to return to their homes
- Facilitated the transition from the UNAMET to UNTAET
- Facilitated the conduct of a humanitarian operation of an increasing size and effectiveness across East Timor.

3. MAJOR THEMES

The US as a supporting player in a multi-national force

“Peace enforcement operations (PEO) are the application of military force or the threat of its use, normally pursuant to international authorization, to compel compliance with resolutions or sanctions designed to maintain or restore peace and order.” JOINT PUB 3-07.3 JOINT TACTICS, TECHNIQUES, AND PROCEDURES FOR PEACE OPERATIONS 12 FEBRUARY 1999.

Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre, addressing Members of the Northern Territories of Australia’s Parliament, made the following points in regard to US participation in Operation STABILISE. First, he expressed admiration for the expertise demonstrated in the successful leadership of INTERFET and for the confidence that Australia as a country exhibited in stepping forward and assuming the lead. Second, he noted the supporting role of the United States and explained that this came about as a result of a certain weariness of the United States resulting from the years of leading peace operations following the fall of the Wall and, most recently, carrying the vast majority of the burden of the NATO action in Kosovo. Third he emphasized the time has come for the US to become comfortable with playing a supporting role in operations where US participation is clearly called for and where another nation with the will and ability to take the lead is available. His thoughts clearly reflect a paradigm change in US policy.

A large portion of US doctrine and the philosophical underpinnings of the planning process make the assumption that American forces will have the leading role. This thought process is inadequate when the decision is made, as it was in this contingency, to limit participation in an operation when the US desires another country to take the lead. The lead country is likely to provide key decision-makers that will recognize the US military’s experience in large-scale operations and welcome their recommendations and advice. However the lead nation will likely follow a path of its own choosing. Thus, the US staff’s ability to shape the action depends upon establishing close personal relationships with the lead country’s key planners at all three levels: strategic, operational, and tactical.

Even in the supporting role, USFI’s efforts were important at the strategic-political level. From the US national leadership to the theater CINC, all efforts were directed at providing a meaningful and visible US contribution to the UN mandated, Australian-led peace enforcement effort. Beyond being a key ally in the Pacific Region, the Australian-led force’s success meant US contributions could be kept to the austere numbers identified in the early days of the crisis by the US President. Austere implied small and small meant more agile with less exposure in a force protection sense for the overall force. This force protection concern fueled the requirement for personnel reporting in detail and led to countless reiterations as to the location and make-up of the force. Significantly, maritime and inter-theater airlift assets were excluded from this accounting but not from the overall calculus of presence. The timely and successive arrival of large-deck amphibious ships off the Dili coast was an important signal of US resolve, even though only limited support was (initially) promised from those platforms.

Another key strategic decision was locating the US National Component headquarters staff in Darwin, Australia throughout the operation. In addition to keeping a significant Intermediate Staging Base (ISB) and bisecting the size of the force protection equation, this command post permitted the US national command element to sit astride several Australian theater commands. The immediate area of operations in Timor was under the command of Major General Peter Cosgrove (HQ INTERFET). However, the principle logistics base at Darwin was under the direct control of Northern Command (HQ NORCOM) and a great deal of the national support and direction was provided by the Australian Strategic Theater headquarters (HQ AST) in Sydney. The Australian dimensioning of theaters was established to allow HQ INTERFET a free hand in operations beyond Australian sovereign air and sea space. However, it introduced a seam or partition into their logistical support and airflow. Eventually, the Australians were able to overcome the effects of this partition.

US forces were able to freely interact to the mutual benefit of each staff. An important side effect of overlapping theater boundaries was the enhanced ability of the US commander to influence perceptions and actions by developing personal relationships with all three theater commanders. A single US C-12 aircraft (and commercial airline tickets) were a key ingredient to this effort in “shuttle diplomacy” with the lead nation.

The initial public affairs effort was strategic as well. PACOM’s guidance in regard to public affairs was unequivocal: be clearly seen in a supporting role. USFI was successful in achieving that objective.



C-12 in direct support of USFI permitted rapid repositioning of key planners and facilitated establishment of close personal relationships with INTERFET counterparts.

The quick infusion of PA personnel to the INTERFET area of operations facilitated setting the stage for the public affairs mission of establishing and maintaining a clear understanding of U.S. involvement in INTERFET with the media. This rapid deployment enabled the USFI PAO to stay in front of the issues with regard to the early establishment of communication with the media. Of primary concern was the possibility of USFI drawing more media attention than warranted by its role. The Australians were leading the force, and many nations were making considerable contributions. Thus, it was inappropriate for the USFI to draw an excessive amount of attention. Therefore,

keeping USFI activities and support in context was the challenge for public affairs. Initially, this required considerable communication with the major media outlets by keeping them informed on a daily basis and putting USFI activities in context.

There were two key events that set the proper stage for USFI activities. The first was Brigadier General Castellaw's participation in an Australian morning news show. The second was a press conference with Major General Cosgrove after the arrival of the USS BELLEAU WOOD. Both events helped keep the media informed on USFI contributions. In addition, within four days of the USS BELLEAU WOOD's arrival, twenty-eight media were invited aboard ship to view activities and interview personnel. This was key to the proper presentation of the ship's role in support of INTERFET and its associated capabilities, including the embarked Marine force. It may be that the PA campaign was too successful. Ambassador Holmes has stated that by not trumpeting the US contribution to INTERFET, a perception that the US support to INTERFET and to the Australians was insignificant is held by a number of Australians, including members of Parliament. This has resulted in strains on the US-Australia partnership due to the erroneous belief that America was not standing side-by-side with the Australians.

US contributions at the operational level were much less visible and, in many cases, deliberately kept that way. The presence of US C-130s in Darwin and East Timor was a key part of the strategically important symbol of US resolve. However, these aircraft and the daily contribution to the INTERFET "airbridge" were crucial to the operational level, as it enabled the initial high tempo flow of supplies across theater boundaries. Just as importantly, the US aircraft created the opportunity for rest and refit of the Australian cargo planes that had borne the brunt of the first efforts.

The remaining operational-level contributions to the theater-wide effort were less tangible and encompassed less visible planning assistance. This advice and support ranged from campaign planning prior to the initial INTERFET deployments into Dili to US unique Civil-Military Operations, intelligence, and communications support. In most cases, the Australian staff received ready confirmation of their basic planning and encouragement/expertise to work on subsequent phases rather than whole-scale revisions to their efforts. The collective US experience in expeditionary operations worldwide more than any specific peace operation expertise, was the steadying effect that the Australian staff appreciated and desired.

The play at the tactical level was determined to a large extent by US technical contributions. The paucity of military assets in the Australian inventory (and the ability to readily interoperate with US systems, personnel, and equipment) enabled the direct value of US-unique contributions to grow out of proportion to their normal importance. Radio relay systems were an essential element of US communications support to four outlying locations in the Dili area. These terrestrial transmission systems provided an early "proof of concept" for high-bandwidth digital applications and paved the way for Australian commercialization efforts. The same US signal unit also provided a key satellite node to a Thai task force operating out of the airfield at Baucau, which enabled the Australians to retain their own satellite communications team for operations with ADF units along the Timorese border.



A US signal battalion TSC-85 satellite communications van basks in a rainbow after a monsoonal downpour in Dili, East Timor.

The technical expertise, systems, and labor contributed by US communications personnel provided key enhancements to the theater network until the arrival of commercial systems in mid-December. Data system planners back in Darwin also assisted NORCOM in the development of a purpose-built coalition wide area network that provided data connectivity for all troop contributing nations as they staged through that location.

Other tactical units such as the TROJAN SPIRIT II, amphibious landing craft, and heavy lift helicopters (both from amphibious decks and later contracted crews operating ashore) provided vital augmented capabilities and flexibility to INTERFET. In addition to completing missions which otherwise would have created inordinate demands on



11th MEU helicopters on the flight deck of USS PELILEU operate within sight of the East Timor coast.

competing resources, their contribution reinforced the theme of a US supporting presence. The ability of USFI forces to absorb external, ad-hoc missions enabled Australian planners to keep their focus tuned to the border region. Elimination of distractions shielded a critical vulnerability and sustained INTERFET's rapid "oil spotting" advance against the militias' center of gravity.

Finally, USFI directly assisted the Australians in Operation STABILISE by providing staff officers to the Air Component Command and Naval Component Command, communications equipment (primarily PSC-5 satellite radios), UHF satellite access, and offers of assistance to speed up the delivery of critical components. These low cost and low risk contributions were lauded by staff sections in many theaters and did much to cement relations in the early days of the operation. The ultimate lesson is that there are many ways for a supporting nation to influence the leadership of a coalition force. However, this influence requires an investment of time, resources, and patience.

To be or not to be a JTF.

“On September 15, 1999, the United Nations Security Council, under Chapter VII of the Charter, authorized the establishment of a multinational force to restore peace and security in East Timor, to protect and support the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), and, within force capabilities, to facilitate humanitarian assistance operations. In support of this multinational effort, I directed a limited number of U.S. military forces to deploy to East Timor to provide support to the multinational force (INTERFET) being assembled under Australian leadership to carry out the mission described in Security Council Resolution 1264. United States support to the multinational force has thus far been limited to communications, intelligence, logistics, planning assistance, and transportation. ” LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE SENATE October 8, 1999

USFI was never designated a Joint Task Force (JTF). Normally, US forces participating in these types of operations are formed into JTFs. This task organization for joint force employment is a common baseline for all Service components and is reflected in how they train, equip, man and write service doctrine. At first, this lack of designation caused some confusion internally as USFI went through the initial crisis response planning and it became a continual source of friction with higher headquarters and supporting agencies/components as the operation matured. The thought was that if you weren't a JTF, you had to operate differently.

The reason for not designating USFI as a JTF was based on the desire to keep the footprint in theater small and to underline the fact that our role was supporting. External to the headquarters, USFI was treated, in some ways, very much as a JTF HQ; the same reports and information flows were required. At other times, sourcing components attempted to layer USFI component organizations and to intervene when “their” resources, people and material, were used outside service specific doctrine (i.e. “Dual-hatted” or assigned missions within their capabilities but outside service roles). In reverse logic, services and agencies refused support or resisted surrendering authority to USFI based on the fact that “you are not a JTF.”

As USFI matured, the command experimented with various organizational structures. Initially, geographical organization was attempted with subordinate components based on location. USFI Sydney, Darwin, Tyndal and Dili were created. This proved unwieldy.

Practicality dictated that the Commander create air force, naval, and Marine components. USFI maintained one geographical component, USFI East Timor (USFIET) commanded by a US Army Colonel who also triple hatted as Deputy USFI and as Army component commander. This worked because during the life of USFIET, the Army was far and away the predominant service on the ground in East Timor.

Many USFI organizational components adopted joint structure names (i.e. a J-staff, COC) primarily for the familiar conventions. Internally, things operated quite differently. The COC was staffed with clerks and watch officers again “dual hatted” from a variety of functional areas, and several ‘compulsory’ structures (such as a Joint Intelligence Center) were not instituted as a labor saving measure. Individual staff sections worked out their own accommodations. Although several early attempts were made to write operational-sized orders, the lack of manpower (and the lead nation role) ultimately resulted in a common philosophic approach and short execute orders (“FragOs”) often followed by informal guidance from Commander, USFI. This approach was uniquely suited to the situation but occasionally not well understood by external organizations and even some subordinate units who were much more familiar/comfortable with detailed written plans and directives.

USFI J4 built a combat service support (CSS) capability one element (and in some cases one person) at a time, which resulted in innovative adaptations to doctrinal logistics support architectures. Although ultimately successful in structuring a functional USFI logistics organization, it was clearly evident that providing logistics support from an ISB required the forward unit to possess at least a modicum of logistics capability to receive, process, and distribute supplies. Without this minimal capability, shipments were lost and delays common—the situation would have been chaotic if it weren’t for the degree of accountability established by the Australian logisticians at the Dili airhead. The joint force’s logistics footprint can be minimal, but it must exist in some capacity.

The legal status of USFI was a significant concern. Since USFI was never designated a JTF with its accompanying structure, the command relationships and legal responsibilities over personnel assigned to USFI were unclear. One example was the delegation of Non Judicial Punishment (NJP) authority over Marine personnel assigned to USFI. Brigadier General Castellaw, as the designated commander, had NJP authority over Marine forces assigned to USFI (though he was never officially granted Special Court Martial authority). However, no intermediate level of USMC NJP authority was resident in USFI, forcing the Commander to be the only NJP authority over Marine forces, with Admiral Blair as the appellate authority. This situation was unwieldy for minor disciplinary situations, which have no need to rise to the flag officer level.

In the end, all USFI personnel adopted the “one team, one fight” motto and solved the problems both horizontally and vertically. It required a willingness to step outside service strictures and to be willing to do more than one thing. It also required the understanding and the willingness of outside components and agencies to provide needed support regardless of designation. Without the familiar JTF construct there was little recourse at the action officer level if the reason for refusing support was lack of JTF designation. The underlying challenge remains that services are not prepared organizationally nor doctrinally to support small scale operations. The service “tool box”

needs to have smaller bits and pieces to plug into an operation this size. Designation as a JTF need not by definition mean a large, robust organization. Instead, JTFs should come in all sizes, not just medium or large.



US C-130 and KC-130 aircraft contributed to the vital “air bridge” between ISB Darwin and East Timor as a highly visible symbol of US involvement.

Fixed personnel constraints and dynamic mission led to solutions beyond doctrine.

“The motto of USFI is “one team, one fight.” There is no room for anybody who just does one thing. Leave your union card at home.” BRIGADIER GENERAL J. G. CASTELLAW, USMC, COMMANDER US FORCES INTERFET

Admiral Blair was frank when he asked “one person to do the work of four.” Initially, the ceiling on personnel produced several cycles of planning, estimating size, and replanning to downsize the capabilities and reach desired manpower numbers. For most functional areas, these initial restrictions were eased after the initial deployment into theater. Billets were increased within the various functional areas incrementally and on a carefully reviewed case-by-case basis to be able to meet the absolute needs of the mission. The net result was gradual development of a staff based on a “just enough” instead of a “just in case” table of organization. This decision made obvious exploitation of the secondary role envisioned for US forces and could not have been used as effectively if American forces were the primary instruments of crisis response.

The small nature of the initial staff resulted in a core group of individuals who formed the ‘reinforcing rods’ for the augmented staff that, like concrete, was later formed over the top of this framework. The core was composed largely of individuals coincidentally conducting a staff CPX (Exercise Tempo Brave 99) at the outbreak of the crisis. In short

order this core staff learned an intuitive and decentralized approach to problem solving. As such the staff could “read each other’s minds” and in many instances were able to develop detailed and synchronized plans almost independently of each other.

A constant juggling of personnel proved to be the most efficient manner in which to address the imposed manpower constraints. For example, in the early phases due to a lack of a planner on the Table of Organization, the senior soldier was dual-hatted as the future ops planner. When the Dili Headquarters was established, the same individual became the J-3. Incoming personnel that were chopped to USFI filled other key positions. Staff officers were sourced from the ARG/MEU to fill planner and watch billets within USFI headquarters and in INTERFET itself. Despite the turbulence, it worked.

One central and recurring theme to be found throughout this report was USFI’s small manpower footprint and concomitant effects it had on operations. USFI soon came to view these manpower limitations as an additional operational constraint – an element of “friction” that had to be overcome through innovation and adaptation. The preoccupation with USFI’s manning level had, during the early phase of the operation, a “tail wagging the dog” effect. Minimum mission requirements were laboriously re-evaluated and adjusted to satisfy manning caps and resulted in “just-in-time staff augmentation.” Often, this left USFI with personnel and skills that were not required while still lacking the skill sets necessary for mission accomplishment. As a result, USFI manpower problems were twofold. First, due to the manpower cap, manning numbers remained insufficient in some functional areas. As an example, USFI Combat Operations Center (COC) personnel were drawn from a myriad of other functional areas sub-optimizing those areas while simultaneously resulting in an inexperienced COC watch section. Second, the military specialty descriptions for requisite skill sets are not equivalent across the services. Thus, simple changes by higher headquarters such as the service component responsible for a specific billet, had a profound outcome on how a staff section/unit could function.

While the pressures USFI experienced in regard to personnel strengths diminished over time, it is essential that planners at all echelons of command understand there is always a minimum number of personnel and specific skill sets which must be provided to a deployed force to ensure mission success even when there is a mandated reliance on contracting and host nation support. The price just for housekeeping overhead is proportionally much greater within smaller joint forces. The deployed force commander must continually re-evaluate his personnel shortfalls and request appropriate adjustments to ensure mission accomplishment.

The majority of logistics issues submitted as lessons learned also identified personnel shortfalls as a continuing concern. These shortfalls, although leading to logistical problems, are inherent in operations where a limited manpower footprint is mandated and the U.S. is in a supporting role. More importantly, these problems were exacerbated because USFI rapidly deployed into an area of operations consisting of a non-contiguous rear area stretching across 500 miles of air and sea space between the intermediate staging base (ISB) at Darwin, Australia and forward deployed forces located in several locations in East Timor.



USFI aircraft and landing craft routinely moved military materiel from other INTERFET Troop Contributing Nations.

A major success during the logistics capability restructuring was assigning the USFI J4 the Logistics Readiness Center (LRC) mission where it could act as the Combat Service Support Operations Center (CSSOC) for the CSS element while simultaneously functioning as the Joint Staff Section for logistics. This innovative approach virtually eliminated the need for a separate command element and CSSOC within the CSS element. The CSS Detachment became the executing agent for logistics tasks and could focus on meeting the needs of the command. USFI J4 effectively conducted logistics planning, coordinated host nation support, conducted contingency contracting, managed common item/service support and performed a multitude of liaison and coordination activities with higher, adjacent and supported commands. This was of particular note, as the small USFI J4 staff was required to deal with J4 issues across the entire spectrum of logistics requirements and conducted strategic, operational, and tactical level logistics activities in support of USFI. This method of conducting business gained maximum benefit from the command's strengths, eliminated unnecessary redundancies, and enhanced the overall flexibility of the logistics organization. The end result was an ISB in Darwin, Australia capable of meeting the logistics needs of USFI and built around "actual needs" rather than "just in case" logistics structure.

One obvious consequence of the manpower constraint on communications personnel was the elimination of a doctrinal Joint Communication Coordination Center (JCCC) watch in an effort to increase the number of field communication support personnel. Therefore, the USFI J6 developed a course of action that relied heavily upon the intuition, good personal judgement and experience of officers and SNCOs assigned to the J6 staff. This highly decentralized and nearly autonomous staff was never larger than nine individuals and responsible for planning tasks for three different communication nodes, providing automation support for the headquarters, and serving as the primary interface for the

PACOM J6 Theater Communication Coordination Center (TCCC). The requests for detailed information from higher headquarters (most notably the TCCC as they compiled their daily briefings) were substantial and many times exceeded the capacity of the local J6 staff to respond and still perform their primary duties. These requests for information were exacerbated by the time zone differential meaning that early morning staff preparation in Hawaii coincided with the end of a long day in operational activities for the Darwin headquarters. However, the PACOM/J6 liaison officer assigned to the staff was intimately familiar with the TCCC concept and developed a workable solution that reduced the formal reporting and accompanying staffing that could have been required. In the long run, the TCCC undoubtedly proved its worth to the PACOM staff but was able to provide little in the way of direct support to USFI.

The majority of legal work was during the initial six weeks of the deployment. Manning impacted the legal effort during that phase of Operation STABILISE as well. Continual Rules of Engagement (ROE) briefs had to be conducted by the Staff Judge Advocate and would have been greatly facilitated with the addition of a legal SNCO. This situation was exacerbated due to the piecemeal nature of personnel deployment, manual ROE card preparation, drafting General Orders, preparation of Powers of Attorney, and the requirement of SJA assuming additional duties to offset the manning shortages of other sections.



As the headquarters staff matured, pragmatic solutions were developed and implemented to respond to a wide range of challenges aggravated by the small footprint. These solutions often times were non-doctrinal, non-service specific and required a unit to perform duties that at times went beyond its original mission statement (i.e. requiring each unit reporting to USFI, such as the ARG/MEU, to provide staff officers to USFI Headquarters).

Commercialization efforts included replacing US heavy lift helicopters with contracted helicopters, aircrews, maintenance, and construction.

This concept of operations allowed the staff to function as a true team of professionals by working in an environment that cultivated aggressive, clear-headed, and commonsense decision-making and decentralized execution. The net effect was a mutual understanding of a common mission characterized by a minimum amount of formal written orders and internal reporting. The key lesson is that a limited force will innovate to the extent necessary to meet the Commander's need to execute an evolving mission.

Be prepared for the “fog of peace”.

“All actions in war take place in an atmosphere of uncertainty--the fog of war. Uncertainty pervades battle in the form of unknowns about the enemy, about the environment, and even about the friendly situation. While we try to reduce these unknowns by gathering information, we must realize we cannot eliminate them. The very nature of war makes absolute certainty impossible; all actions in war will be based on incomplete, inaccurate, or even contradictory information.” MCRP-1

USMC service doctrine describes the Clausewitzian concept that all actions on the battlefield are susceptible to the phenomena known as the “fog of war.” This same phenomena reaches new heights in peace and humanitarian assistance operations where there are many nations and non-state entities vying to impose their will over a certain aspect of the operation. This magnifies the importance of strong personal relationships between commanders and increases the importance of dedicated versus shared access to resources.

For example, communications and information systems are important weapons in peace enforcement operations and are critical to the success or failure of an assigned mission. Even though the local communications systems may contribute to the Global Information Grid espoused by current technical thinkers, those assets need to remain under the direct control of the US Force Commander. It is the commander who ultimately must make the decision when it is appropriate to assign his forces to tasks or release them for redeployment to home station. COMUSFI was given a limited number of C4I assets long before the Operation STABILISE mission ceased to evolve.

As the mission evolved the emerging requirements forced the commander to plan from a capability-based standpoint and employ his fixed assets in a fashion that often deviated from the initial concept. Unfortunately these deviations led to endless queries and concerns from a variety of agencies outside the theater. These queries appeared more concerned about the procedures than the actual mission to be performed. In most instances, solutions were developed based on commander's intent and were accomplished through direct coordination -- “sneaker connectivity” -- with the affected agencies. The concept of a Global Information Grid is a workable construct but this grid must flexibly change to effectively support the Commander's plan in the same manner as other weapon systems. The capacity to effect local changes not only reinforces the prerogative of command but enhances the Global Information Grid paradigm as this grid must organically respond to local stresses and demands.



CH-53Es delivering HA supplies in the Oecussi enclave.

Like a living organism, the Grid must determine what impulses and reactions must be transmitted between local cells and those that are important enough to burden the shared connections between those cells and central coordination nodes.

Furthermore, because the usual principles of war have different applicability and limited available resources, uncertainty in peace is even greater. As the crisis eases, various national interests tend to grow and increase the “fog of peace.” Getting in early is essential—if you are a latecomer you get ignored. There are opportunities when pressing the lead nation for support can significantly reduce that uncertainty, but there are a fixed number of “silver bullets” that any country can call upon. Unfortunately, the ultimate means of operating in a situation of uncertainty is to “play the national card” and reserve use of national assets as the best guarantor that a planned US operation will be executed with a minimum of uncertainty. In the end, the “fog of peace” has proven to be as problematic as the “fog of war” and requires similar planning and vigilance.

4. COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

“So from my point of view this has been a solid operation and unique. We are not leading the effort. We are supporting it in the ways that we can do and cooperating with others as they each make their own unique contributions. I think this is exactly the right thing to do when you have an ally like Australia that's close to the situation, that has a strong interest in seeing it solved, has the people and the planning ability to take the lead, for the other nations in the region and those of us from outside the region who have an interest like the United States, to do the kind of mission that's involved there in East Timor.” Admiral Dennis Blair, Commander In Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, Sept 24, 1999.

In any operation there are many lessons that may be drawn from the US experience in OPERATION STABILISE. Many of those lessons learned have been collected by my staff and are detailed elsewhere. In my view as Commander, USFI there are three major “take-aways” that merit special notice:

First, and most important, this peace enforcement operation was a success. The Australian-led multi-national force conducted an impressive entry operation, established and sustained a forceful presence, and then moved out to restore peace and security to a devastated land. The killings were stopped and the rampage ended, setting conditions for thousands of displaced individuals to return to their homes, implementation of humanitarian efforts and the transfer of authority to a UN peacekeeping force.



MGEN Cosgrove (COMINTERFET) and BGen Castellaw (COMUSFI) preside over Marine Corps Birthday formation, US Forces Compound, Dili, East Timor, 10 November 1999.

Second, the old paradigm, which says that in order to have US participation in peace enforcement operations the force must be US led, has been broken. Although over 5,000 US personnel were involved in supporting OPERATION STABILISE, only a few hundred were ever on the ground at any one time in East Timor. The US contribution of airlift and sealift, intelligence assets, civil affairs expertise, heavy lift helicopters, communication resources and planning expertise were “force multipliers”. Because the operation did not depend on US leadership for the duration, the supporting role facilitated planning and executing an early “exit strategy”. Since US support was based on providing “unique” capabilities, it was possible to establish “conditions” for ending US participation. As an example, once commercialized communications were in place, a key condition was set for withdrawing the signal battalion’s elements responsible for providing tactical communications in East Timor.

One paradigm that has not been broken is the perception that to be a truly credible force, combat troops must be on the ground. News accounts containing clips on American satellite dishes were not common. The news focus in East Timor dwelled on the Aussie “digger” and his fellow infantry counterparts from participating countries. While certain elements of the Australian government and military recognized the US contribution as significant, many Australians were either unaware of US participation or viewed it as token.

Third, and last, the lack of JTF designation proved awkward in dealing with both internal and external processes. This occurred because another paradigm says that the US employs joint forces as JTFs. All services and the Joint Staff are comfortable with this existing doctrine and procedures detailing operations and relationships. Lack of the JTF designation introduced a measure of uncertainty regarding authority, responsibility and relationships.

Initially, the USFI staff spent far too much time trying not to “look” like a JTF in internal organization and functioning. The fact is that there is no standard JTF. Joint Pub 5-00.2 states “the specific organization and staffing of a JTF will vary based on the mission assigned, the environment within which operations must be conducted, the makeup of existing and potential enemy forces, and the time available to reach the desired end state.” JTF Timor Sea, as an example, was composed entirely of a naval force and was OPCON to USFI. Ultimately, the progressive development of USFI reflected a mixture of what worked without reference to a force definition. For example, the Dili headquarters was initially a geographical command and evolved into an organization that was predominantly Army. Other components remained service-based.

Externally, most agencies assumed that USFI was a JTF and acted accordingly. Problems developed only when some of those agencies discovered the lack of JTF designation and used the absence as a basis for limiting support, intervening in component activities, and withholding directive authority. The bottom-line is that the services and Joint Staff are unfamiliar with operating outside the “JTF” paradigm and to do so will require establishment of a protocol to deal with a non-JTF status.

In the end, USFI accomplished its multi-faceted mission with an austere staff headquarters complement encompassing a broad range of objectives – operational to

humanitarian. The challenges encountered by U.S. forces often forced the USFI staff to “think outside the box” and arrive at unique solutions to non-doctrinal problems. Many shortfalls and gaps were identified throughout the operation. Some were easily addressed and were an issue for only a short duration. Others were more insidious and continued to plague the USFI staff for much of the deployment. Nevertheless, due to the flexibility and adaptability of the military personnel involved with Operation STABILISE, these obstacles were met and overcome. The lessons learned from this unique operation can benefit future undertakings when US forces are supporting peace operations under another nation’s leadership.

APPENDIX A. OPERATION STABILISE THEATER OF OPERATIONS



The Operation STABILISE area of operations encompassed Northern Command (NORCOM) and International Force East Timor (INTERFET) theaters.

Northern Australia

Darwin, Australia is located approximately 500 miles southeast of East Timor. Darwin's position made it an ideal location for the establishment of an Intermediate Staging Base (ISB) for USFI. Air and sea transportation assets were used throughout this deployment to meet operational needs. The excellent port facilities enabled large numbers of personnel or equipment to be transported by sea between Darwin and East Timor expeditiously and in just under twelve hours by high-speed catamaran.

The ease of air transportation from Darwin proved to be critical and RAAF (Royal Australian Air Force) Darwin was ideally situated to function as the ISB. The airfield and its inherent infrastructure were more than adequate for STRATAIR C-5 and USFI C-130 and C-12 aircraft operations. Several other nations also provided C-130 "Herc" transport planes for the INTERFET Coalition Air Wing (ICAW) and based their aircraft at RAAF Darwin. In addition, RAAF Darwin was co-located with Darwin International Airport facilitating the arrival of personnel into theater via commercial means. RAAF Darwin provided exceptional support enabling USFI to focus on the mission.

Australian Northern Command (NORCOM) was a scant eight miles from RAAF Darwin. Contributing nations established liaison headquarters in Darwin to conduct logistical

staging operations from their home country into Darwin for further onward movement to East Timor. Thus, close coordination between the NORCOM, RAAF Darwin, USFI, and contributing nations' staffs was easily maintained and an exceptional working relationship existed between USFI and its Australian counterparts.

RAAF Tyndal base is located approximately 200 miles southwest of RAAF Darwin and was instrumental in supporting USFI's mission. EP-3 aircraft were based there thus providing USFI the flexibility it needed early in the deployment when RAAF Darwin was congested.

The logistical importance of ISB Darwin was proven on numerous occasions throughout this real world deployment. The unsophisticated airfield support and nearly non-existent infrastructure in East Timor made ISB Darwin the logical gateway for this operation. The critical importance of establishing an ISB, particularly in support of a mission that can quickly transition from a peace enforcement to a humanitarian operation was proven throughout Operation STABILISE. This concept is discussed in much greater detail later in this document.

East Timor (EM)

Timor Island is the largest and easternmost of the Lesser Sunda Archipelago. To its south is the Indian Ocean (Timor Sea) and to the north lies the Pacific Ocean (Banda Sea). The island is roughly oblong-shaped, covering 32,350 square kilometers; it is about 470 kilometers long and 110 kilometers wide. East Timor occupies an estimated 19,000 square kilometers of the eastern half of the island. Included in East Timor's territory is the Oecussi Enclave, about 70 kilometers west of the border town of Batugade, with an area of 2,461 square kilometers and a coastline of 48 kilometers. Other territories include the island of Atauro (144 sq km) located 23 miles north of the capital Dili, and the small island of Jaco (8 sq km) on the extreme east of East Timor.

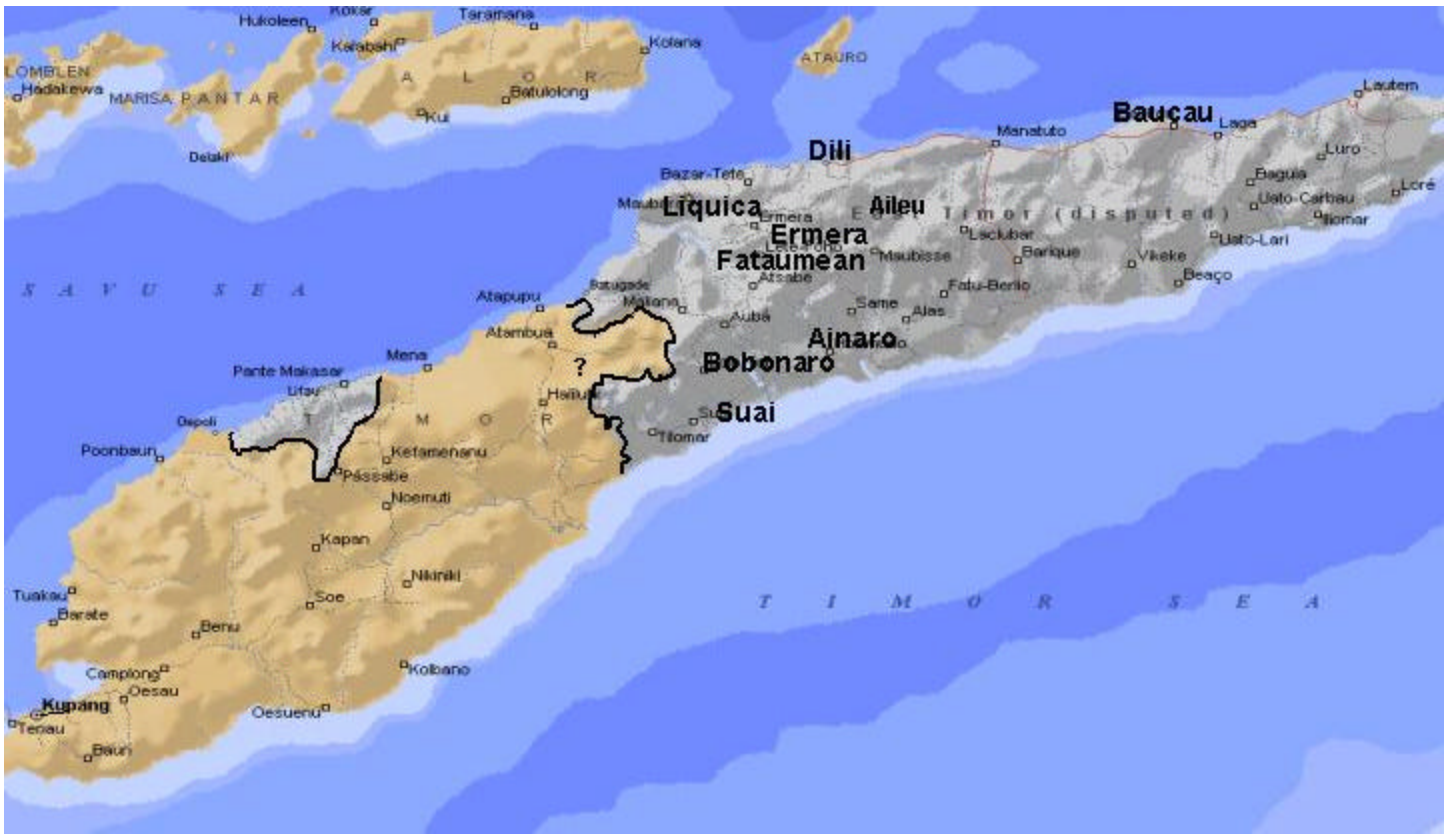
Central East Timor is mountainous; in many locations the mountains extend to the shoreline and form steep coastlines. In many areas there are fringing reefs. The island's surface is dry, rocky, and has areas of sparse vegetation as well as rainforest. Hot, dry northern Australian winds influence the climate. There are distinct wet and dry seasons. Generally, the wet season falls between November and April and the dry season between May and October. The most significant urban area, situated in the north of the province, is Dili, the provincial capital.

East Timor is an extremely poor land struggling to emerge as a new nation with its minimal existing infrastructure virtually destroyed by the recent conflict. Most existing facilities are unusable forcing deploying forces to bring expeditionary support and to establish air and sea bridges to provide sustainment.



View of Dili harbor with Komoro Field in the foreground.

(This page replaced with detailed map.)



APPENDIX B. USFI CAPABILITIES IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION STABILISE

(From JP 3-07.3 “Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Peace Operations”, items underlined in ***bold italics*** denote contributions by USFI forces)

GROUND FORCE SUPPORT CAPABILITIES

- ***Observing, monitoring, and reporting***
- Maintaining public order and protecting civilians and public officials
- Support to elections
- ***Delivery and protection of humanitarian assistance***
- ***Manning of checkpoints***
- Patrolling
- Demining Operations
- Supervising truces and cease-fires
- ***Intelligence***
- Surveillance
- Reconnaissance
- Incident management and crowd control
- Negotiation and mediation
- Interposition between parties to the conflict
- Demobilization and disarmament
- Inspection of facilities

AIR ASSET SUPPORT CAPABILITIES

- ***Airlift***
- ***Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance***
- ***Command, control, communications, and information gathering***
- Aerial refueling
- ***Search and rescue***
- Air traffic control support
- ***Medical evacuation***
- Combat air patrol
- ***Airspace control***
- Early warning of hostile actions
- ***Delivery of humanitarian aid***
- Deterrence of hostile actions
- Force protection
- ***Logistics***
- ***Resupply***

NAVAL VESSELS SUPPORT CAPABILITIES

- *A staging and sustainment platform for amphibious forces, particularly in the initial stages of peacekeeping operations if naval forces are in position before significant land-based forces arrive. They may also be used in the reinforcement or evacuation of peacekeeping forces*
- *Escort for neutral shipping in areas adjacent to territories of the parties to a dispute*
- A neutral location where representatives may meet for supervised negotiations
- *Early warning of potentially dangerous or hostile actions*
- Protection of offshore assets (primarily petroleum-production platforms and deep water offshore port facilities)
- *Access to, or transit of, oceans and waterways*
- *Search and rescue*
- *Port visits*
- Coastal sea control
- Monitor and enforce exclusive economic zones
- *Escort for vessels*
- *Coastal patrol and surveillance*

APPENDIX C. USFI KEY PERSONNEL AND ASSIGNED UNITS

COMMANDER, INTERFET

- Major General Peter J. Cosgrove, Australian Army

COMMANDER, USFI

- Brigadier General John G. Castellaw, USMC

DEPUTY COMMANDER, USFI

- Colonel Randolph Strong, USA/Colonel Michael Williams, USMC

CHIEF OF STAFF, USFI

- Colonel Robert Herkenham, USMC
- Lieutenant Colonel Richard Ballentine, USMC

PRINCIPAL STAFF, USFI

- Lieutenant Colonel Keith Hulet, USMCR, J-1
- Lieutenant Colonel (Sel.) John M. Farley, USMC, J-2
- Colonel Robert Martin, USAFR, J-3/Colonel Richard Mingo USMC, J-3/LtCol Laurent Baker, USMC, J-3
- Lieutenant Colonel Richard Balletine, USMC, J-4
- Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Beutel, USMC, J-6
- Lieutenant Colonel Leo Falcam, USMC, Air Officer
- Commander Jeffrey Yund, USN, Preventive Medicine
- Major Richard Long, USMC, Public Affairs Officer
- Major Eric Kleis, USMC, Staff Judge Advocate
- Captain Chris Abate, USAF, Comptroller

US OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO HQ INTERFET

- Colonel Richard Mingo, USMC, Deputy Air Component Commander
- Lieutenant Colonel Michael Thyrring, USMC, C5 Plans Officer

LIST OF UNITS ASSIGNED TO USFI

- JTF Timor Sea Operations, 7th Fleet, Pacific Fleet
 - USS MOBILE BAY, CJTF TSO (CAPT Edward Rogers, USN)
 - USNS KILAUEA
 - USNS SAN JOSE
- EP-3 Detachment
- CINCPAC Planning Team
- USF Australian Logistics Planning Staff, Brisbane and Sydney (Colonel George Borowsky, USA and later Colonel Mark Dean, USA)
- Civil-Military Affairs Operation Center, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion, US Army Special Operations Command (Lieutenant Colonel Jose Uson, USA)
- MSQ-126, Pacific Fleet (Chief Warrant Officer Scott Griffin, USN/Major Charles Peabody, USMC)
- 613th Air Expeditionary Group, 13th Air Force, Pacific Air Forces (Colonel Robert Sheekly, USAF)
- TROJAN SPIRIT II, Intelligence Brigade, US Army Pacific (1st Lieutenant Jason Farrell, USA)
- USS BELLEAU WOOD Task Element, Amphibious Squadron Eleven, Amphibious Group One, 7th Fleet, Pacific Fleet (Captain Lee Touchberry, USN)
 - USS BELLEAU WOOD, Amphibious Group One, 7th Fleet, Pacific Fleet (Captain Thomas Parker, USN)
- 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, III MEF, Marine Forces Pacific (Colonel David Fulton, USMC)
- USS PELILEU Task Element, Amphibious Squadron One, Amphibious Group Three, 3rd Fleet, Pacific Fleet (Captain William Hopper, USN)
 - USS PELILEU, Amphibious Group Three, 3rd Fleet, Pacific Fleet (Captain Larry Watson, USN)
- 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, I MEF, Marine Forces Pacific (Colonel Thomas Moore, USMC)
- C-12 Detachment, Marine Corps Bases Japan (Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Houser/Lieutenant Colonel William Grace/Lieutenant Colonel Sam Collins)
- Task Force Thunderbird, 11th Signal Bde, Army Signal Command (Lieutenant Colonel Michael Yarmie, USA)
- USS JUNEAU, Amphibious Squadron Eleven, Amphibious Group One, 7th Fleet, Pacific Fleet (Captain Joseph Miller, USN)

APPENDIX D. USFI STATISTICS

Personnel Assigned	
US Forces HQ (All locations)	644
USS BELLEAU WOOD	1942
USS PELILEU	2319
USS SAN JOSE	186
USS MOBILE BAY	357
USS KILAHUEA	47
USS JUNEAU	650
<i>Total</i>	6,145

Strategic Mobility Data

- Air/Surface Movement Support for US Forces East Timor
 - Sorties: 415
 - Pax: 1,398
 - S/Ton: 572.75
- US C130 Assets utilized in support of INTERFET
 - Sorties: 151
 - Pax: 2,301
 - S/Ton: 195.75
- Strategic Airlift in support of USF & INTERFET
 - Sorties: 55
 - Pax: 2,557
 - S/Ton: 842.8
- Strategic Sealift
 - Vessel: 1
 - Pax: 2
 - S/Ton: 549.2

Humanitarian Assistance Data

- Total Pax: 1418
- S/Ton: 613.7
- Flight Hrs: 235.23

Accounting Data

Disbursing operations entailed check cashing and currency exchange services of more than thirty thousand dollars. These services were provided in Dili, East Timor and Darwin, Australia. In addition, the Comptroller coordinated host nation resources consisting of meals, lodging, ground fuel, AVFUEL, and telephone support on a cost recovery basis totaling in excess of \$1 million. Local procurement of all other required resources topped the \$1 million threshold as well. Preparation of humanitarian assistance cost data was also a Comptroller responsibility. This included C-130, CH-46, CH-53, LCU, and contract helicopters operating hours equating to \$1.5 million in specifically dedicated funding. Additionally, over \$3.5 million was obligated for operational flying missions outside the humanitarian realm for all previously mentioned type/model/series, as well as a C-12 detachment. USFI successfully met all mission requirements for a total cost of \$7.5 million.